

BOOK REVIEWS

PHYSICAL DIAGNOSIS. By Ralph H. Major, M.D., Professor of Medicine, The University of Kansas. 4th edition. Illustrated. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia. 1951. 446 pages. \$6.50.

The fact that this textbook on physical diagnosis has reached a fourth edition bespeaks its worth. It is one of the standard books on the subject. In each edition the author has improved the work by correction of inevitable errors, by improvements and additions to the text and by the further use of diagrams and illustrations. The fourth edition continues this trend.

The book is well organized. The material is presented in the sequence commonly followed in the performance of a physical examination. The text is well written and easy to read. An enlivening feature is the author's frequent quotation from classical descriptions together with interesting and pertinent anecdotes. Dr. Major believes, with Osler, that "when you can, read the original descriptions of the masters, who with crude methods of study, saw so clearly." Pertinent new facts and new interpretations are included. The material is thoroughly up to date. The whole is blended into a concise, interesting and easily readable text.

An outstanding feature of the book is the liberal use of diagrams and photographs. Many have been added and others have been improved since the earlier editions. They effectively supplement the text and greatly add to the interest of the book. Each chapter is concluded with a bibliography which documents the material of the text. As one might expect, the bibliography contains many references to classical descriptions which would be particularly valuable to those who are interested in the history of medicine or to those interested in further study.

All in all, this book is an excellent text on physical diagnosis. It presents the subject readably and effectively, with thoroughness and with perspective. It should be useful to the student, teacher and practitioner.

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PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC HEALTH ADMINISTRATION. By John J. Hanlon, M.S., M.D., M.P.H., Associate Professor of Public Health Practice, School of Public Health, University of Michigan. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1950. \$6.00.

This book should be interesting and valuable for every physician who recognizes professional responsibilities beyond those of private practice. From it, he can enhance his understanding of the motives and methods of public health workers. Hanlon devotes a section of 80 pages to the philosophy and background of public health, and maintains that successful workers in this field must be strongly idealistic. The shocking, abominable state of affairs under which life was lived a century and more ago is recounted, and the growth of a community conscience which led to the alleviation of these conditions is clearly set forth by the extensive use of quotations from the leaders in medicine, sanitary science, and social welfare of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Reading this, one can see how present-day public health workers may be impatient at delay in bringing all of our present knowledge of preventive medicine to all the people.

The introductory section also includes an extensive development of data on the economic value of public health work. Examples drawn from this should be effective in convincing laymen that support of well-designed preventive medical programs is a good investment.

Physicians interested in medical economics and the interrelationships of government and medicine will find valuable background material on the growth of the Federal govern-

ment programs which have modified activities in local health departments so markedly. Hanlon appears to be an open-minded conservative in his discussion of these matters. He devotes little space to the consideration of medical treatment or hospitalization as a public health measure, even for such diseases as tuberculosis and syphilis. He repeatedly emphasizes the important role to be played by private practitioners in a well-developed public health program. In his presentation of doctor-patient-government relationships, he strives to present facts on all sides of the issues and in general to let the reader draw his own conclusions.

The chapters on managing the work of others are done well. Although much of the material is obviously plain common sense, its presentation in a systematic and orderly way will help one to remember it and to use it in those times of stress when it is most needed. Although this material is addressed to a specific group, the principles and methods outlined can be used profitably in the private office, the home, or in the professional society equally well. Other topics covered include fiscal management, legal considerations, public relations, and the programs under the principal health department divisions, such as vital statistics, child and maternal health, and so on. Industrial hygiene services are slighted.

The main criticisms refer to form, rather than content: There is a frequent lack of juxtaposition between the tables and figures and the related text. The captions of the tables and figures are not as clear as they might be, in some instances.

On the whole, this is a well-balanced, well-written, informative book, certain to be of value to public health workers, and likely to be interesting to many others.

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CANCER AS I SEE IT. By Henry W. Abelmann, M.D., The Philosophical Library, New York, 1951. 100 pages. \$2.75.

This little book presents the author's interpretation of his observations and research on cancer in the last 45 years. The theme developed throughout is that all malignant disease is caused by a microscopic organism, and that all types of cancer are different manifestations of the invasion of this organism. Genetics and irritation are considered as predisposing factors in diminishing cell resistance, but the real cause is this pleomorphic parasite which he designates as a "mold fungus" and later as a "germ virus."

Included in this common etiology are all types of carcinoma, sarcoma, pernicious anemia, leukemia, Paget's disease, Hodgkin's disease, mycosis fungoides, and precancerous hyperplasia (which is called cancer granuloma). The type of cancer produced is due to the stage of pleomorphism and the reaction specific to each type of cell which it attacks. Melanomas are caused by a black mold fungus and chloroma by a green mold fungus.

The pleomorphic stages of this cancer parasite are considered to cover the spectrum of microscopic biology from a mold to the ultramicroscopic virus. In the mold stage, infiltration of the interstitial tissues causes a chronic inflammatory cancer granuloma. In the virus stage the parasite penetrates the cell membrane of a somatic cell and makes it a cancer cell, giving that cell all of its malignant characteristics.

The author considers the various inclusion bodies reported in cancer from the time of Virchow and San Felecis to Dr. Irene Miller, not as contaminants but as different forms of the organism that causes cancer. "The pleomorphic germ endowed with different properties can explain all the